

West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571, IFT, AFT, AFL-CIO

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

WSTU/March

3/8—Registration deadline for Student Loan Forgiveness Workshop & Registration deadline for WLT Mod 3 Workshop
 3/12—Student Loan Forgiveness Workshop (4:30 p.m.-Westmont)
 3/12—Deadline for Area Trustees nominations
 3/12—ExBd Meeting - (6:30 pm.-Westmont)
 3/12—Pickup AFT Convention delegate ballots
 3/12—571 proposed 2018-19 budget presented to ExBd
 3/15—Worksite Leader Training Mod 3 - (5 p.m.-Westmont)

Union Messenger

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The Illinois Governor Strikes Again

The sword has fallen once again. In his effort to take away the freedom of working people to



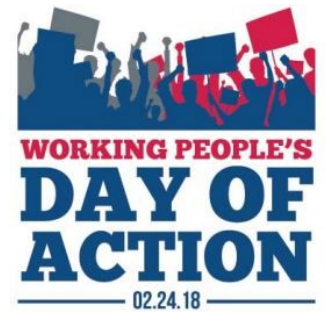
join in strong unions to improve their lives, Rauner continues to politically attack public service workers. A lawsuit originally filed in Illinois was to bar public sector fair share fees.

Those are the fees that non-members pay for their representation, which is required by law, in negotiations on behalf of all

workers. The Illinois court said the Governor could not bring this action since he is not an employee paying union fair share fees. So the legal arm of the National Right-to-Work Foundation found employees to intervene in the suit Rauner had filed which carried the case forward. Mark Janus, an Illinois AFSCME fair share fee payer, contends that by deducting such a fee from his wages as a condition of employment, the State of Illinois has violated his First Amendment Right to free speech.

The Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) receives 7,000-8,000 petitions a year to hear only the 80 cases it selects. In 2018, an important case being heard with arguments on Monday, February 26, 2018, is *Janus v. AFSCME Council 31*. This case could radically affect how Illinois public sector unions will operate. No one is required to join a union and no one is required to pay any fees that go to politics or political candidates. This is the law. Yet this case could undermine the interests of millions of workers across the country who benefit from collective bargaining.

AFT President Randi Weingarten states "The current law has preserved labor peace for four decades by balancing the interest of workers and employers and fostering partnerships to improve school districts and other public-sector workplaces. We argue that engaging in collective bargaining is constitutionally no different than the state paying a consultant to advise it on employment relations issues. Further, the plaintiff's argument is a dishonest rejection of established legal precedent, reaffirmed many times, and therefore must fail."



Teacher Turnover and Teacher Shortages

By Bonnie Saracco

Teacher shortages are spreading throughout the United States. They are caused not by a shortage of candidates for teaching positions, but rather by the ever-increasing rate of teacher turnover. Last summer's AFT TEACH 2017 Conference featured several sessions presenting the facts about this issue.

Teacher turnover costs our country up to \$ 2.2 billion dollars a year in recruitment and hiring costs.

Approximately 13% of teachers leave the profession or move each year. Teacher turnover, which is most severe in high-poverty schools, is also an equity issue. Low-income students are much more likely to be taught by teachers who are not certified in their subject areas. And, while new teachers can be skilled, there is ample research supporting that teaching expertise develops over time. Impoverished students do not have the same opportunity to learn from experienced teachers as do more affluent students. Also, excessive teacher turnover negatively affects entire school buildings, because trust and collegiality grow over time.

Teacher turnover is a problem here in Illinois. IFT recently participated in an Illinois State Senate hearing about it. The shortage of substitute teachers is already severe, resulting in teachers having to give up preparation and collaboration time to cover classes.

Of course one cause of teacher turnover is that teaching is not as well-paid as other professions. This pay gap is only getting worse under the privatization policies of the Trump administration with its Department of Education under Secretary Betsy DeVos. This is exemplified by the acute current situation in Arizona. In the September 2017 *Harper's*, "Class Is Dismissed" by Alexandria Neason, we can see how this is being played out in the Arizona schools.



Neason reports that Arizona public schools are surpassed only by Idaho public schools in being poorly-funded. **Some Arizona public schools can afford to operate only four days a week. Privatization schemes have drained the public schools there of needed funds.** Arizona teachers routinely have to canvass door-to-door, making the case for votes for school funding referenda. The average teacher starting salary in Arizona is \$31,874. Ninety percent of the teachers recruited to Arizona quit or move to other states within five years.

The latest "scholarship" legislation here in Illinois, a voucher scheme, will also drain public schools of needed funds. **And a significant problem is that private schools receiving these funds are not required to be recognized as schools by the Illinois State Board of Education to receive these funds.** This obviously puts Illinois students at risk by failing to eliminate schools which do not meet acceptable educational and safety standards.

But, interestingly, the research shows that low salaries are not the primary cause of teacher turnover. Teacher surveys report that stress, lack of mentoring and support, and inappropriate teacher evaluations based on standardized test scores are really the main reasons why people leave teaching. Teachers who work in low-performing schools are those most likely to leave teaching due to inappropriate evaluation systems...more about that next month.

KNOW YOUR WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

by Tom Smith and Arnavaz Mistry-Mujthaba

Periodically, employees may be required to meet with a representative of the Administration regarding disciplinary issues. Starting in the 1970s the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), Illinois Education Labor Relations Board (IELRB), and the U.S. Supreme Court have issued decisions supporting what is known as an employee's "Weingarten Rights." Any time you find yourself facing a meeting with any agent of the Administration and reasonably believe this meeting could result in disciplinary action against you, these rights apply. It is not necessary that the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) include these rights for you to be protected; however, the CBA may include broader rights than the statute provides, so it is important to know your CBA.

1. Any time you are called to a meeting with your Administration, you should know the nature of the meeting beforehand. If the person calling this meeting does not volunteer this information, ask.
2. If you reasonably believe the nature of the meeting is disciplinary, respectfully request that a Union representative be present. Interrupt this meeting, if necessary.
3. The Administration now faces three options:
 - a. Stop the questioning until the Union representative arrives,
 - b. Cancel the meeting, or
 - c. Give you the choice of ending the meeting or continuing without representation.
4. Do not continue the meeting without Union representation.
5. If the Administration insists that the meeting continue without representation, an unfair labor practice has been committed. You have the option of keeping silent or leaving the meeting. Inform the Union at once and memorialize in writing management's denial of your Weingarten rights.

When you meet with the Administration and the Union representative, the Administration must afford you certain privileges.

1. The Administration must inform the Union representative of the subject of the meeting.
2. The Union representative must be given adequate opportunity for the representative to take you aside for a consultation before the meeting.
3. During the meeting, the representative has the right to interrupt to clarify confusing questions or to end intimidation.
4. The Union may give you advice on how to answer any question.
5. The Union may add information at the end of the meeting to support your position.

The biggest mistake employees make is to meet without the Union being present. Your Union leadership will provide you with a Weingarten rights card. Please keep this card handy, take it with you into a meeting, refer to the back if necessary, and do not hesitate to contact a Union representative. Always remember that exercising these rights and securing appropriate Union representation rest solely with you. The Administration is under no obligation to read you your Weingarten Rights. You must initiate these rights to enjoy the protections which are yours by law.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A UNION MEMBER

As a Union member you are entitled to a number of benefits. One such benefit is the right to have Union representation and/or assistance in resolving disputes that arise out of the work place. This benefit is summarized below.

- You have the right to legal assistance in controversies that arise from incidents occurring in conjunction with your job. The Union determines the level of legal support that will be provided.
- You have the right to file a grievance over violations of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) by your employer.
- You have the right to Union assistance in processing and resolving any grievance over a violation of the CBA.
- You have the right to appeal any denial of Union assistance in exercising the aforementioned rights to the Local 571 Executive Board.
- You have the right to appeal a denial of assistance by the 571 Executive Board to the Local 571 House of Representatives.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding these rights or the implementation thereof, please call the Local 571 office at 630-468-4098.

AFT and IFT Leadership Conference

The weekend of January 19-20, 2018, AFT leaders from around the Midwest met to receive updates, exchange ideas, discuss and promote the AFT and its regional affiliates. Beside those from Illinois, Local Presidents from Indiana, Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin and Missouri who attended represented all AFT Constituencies from K-12, Higher Ed, State employees, Nurses and Health Professionals and Retirees.

On Friday evening there was a reception where leaders had an opportunity to reconnect and make new friends. Saturday included panel discussions on Union Building through Member Engagement and an update on Election 2018. The keynote luncheon address was given by AFT President Randi Weingarten who always "revs up" the crowd with her fiery speech and continuing fight for Unions and Democracy.

The afternoon provided leaders the opportunity to attend at least three workshops of their choice ranging from Elements of a Successful Contract Campaign to Student Debt Clinics.

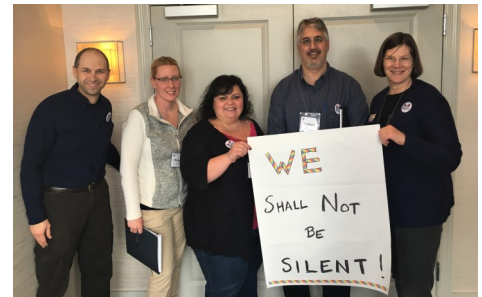
The IFT Presidents Conference was held on Sunday morning. Instruction and table discussions furthered the key elements of Preparing for the *Janus* Decision and Illinois 2018 Elections and Developing a Successful Local Structure, especially by having meaningful one-on-one connections with members. Illinois Local Leaders had an opportunity to interact with IFT Field Staff to help them in setting goals to further engage members in their Local and/or Council.

As always, IFT President Dan Montgomery ended the conference with inspirational words and the challenge

to build the Union, despite what the Supreme Court decision may bring.

571 Council Presidents prepared a poster in solidarity which referenced the Women's Walks that went on during the weekend all over the state including East Peoria.

Local 571 Council Presidents



Present were (l->r) Kyle Stern (Argo H.S. Teachers), Maggie Riley (Proviso Teachers), Rachel Esposito (Cicero), Tony LaCivita (Morton H.S.) and Emily Ishida (Elmhurst PSRPs).

2018 Primary Election

12/20/2017	First day to apply for a mail ballot
2/8/2018	Statutory beginning of the early voting period
2/20/2018	Last day to register to vote by paper application
2/21/2018	First day of grace period registration and voting
3/4/2018	Last day to register to vote by online application
3/5/2018	First day of early voting
3/15/2018	Last day to request a mail ballot, including military and overseas voters
3/19/2018	Last day of early voting
3/19/2018	Last day of grace period registration and voting
3/20/2018	Last day mail ballots can be postmarked
3/20/2018	Election Day



Student Loan Debt Forgiveness Workshop

At this workshop, Kim Eck, the subject-matter expert from the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), will discuss and answer questions about student debt and loan forgiveness.

WHEN: Monday, March 12, 2018

TIME: 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

WHERE: Robert M. Healey Conference Center
500 Oakmont Lane (Entrance E or D)
Westmont, IL 60559

COST: Free to Union members

R.S.V.P.: If you wish to participate, contact Judy Jennings by phone at 630-468-4098 or by e-mail at jjennings@ift-aft.org by March 8.

OTHER: A light dinner will be served.

IMPORTANT: Anyone who signs up to attend the workshop and finds that he/she can't attend, must notify Judy by 5:00 p.m. on March 8, or he/she may be charged \$15 for the cost of the dinner.

Local 571 Area Trustees Election

Nominations are now being accepted for Local 571 Executive Board Area Trustees. The Executive Board of Local 571 shall consist of the Officers of Local 571 which include four (4) Area Trustees, at least one of whom is a PSRP member, and the Local 571 Council Presidents who serve as Trustees. All Local 571 members are eligible to be nominated as Local 571 Area Trustees. The term of office is two (2) years beginning July 1, 2018, and by virtue of their election, they shall be elected also as delegates to the AFT and IFT Conventions. Nominations must be printed or typed (name and Council) and received in the Local 571 office on or before March 12, 2018. Nominees will receive a written or electronic acknowledgement of receipt. Voting will take place in each Council of the West Suburban Teachers Union Local 571 via secret ballot. Council leaders will notify members of the date(s) and location(s) that voting will take place. Interested individuals may request further information about the duties of the office by contacting Local 571. Retired members' ballots will be mailed via U.S. Postal Service to their homes.

**WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 14**



MONDAY FEBRUARY 19



The Illinois Governor Strikes Again *(cont. from page 1)*

The AFT filed an amicus brief in support of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees against the corporate-backed plaintiff in the SCOTUS case *Janus v. AFSCME Council 31*. The real impact of this case will be that by abolishing fair share fees, employees who benefit from the gains the union makes will not have to pay anything toward the cost of that representation. The wealthy elite behind this case want to drain the unions of resources so that working people will not have a strong voice. If the corporate CEOs behind this case get their way, they will take away the freedom of working people to come together in a strong union.

To challenge a system that favors corporations and the wealthy, a Working People's Day of Action will be held across the country on Saturday, February 24, 2018. Please join the Chicago rally in downtown Chicago at noon. Buses are being chartered with several buses leaving from this area. You will be able to sign up through Action Network to attend the rally. A link will be sent, so watch your e-mail. Bring your colleagues and family to downtown Chicago at noon on Saturday, February 24. Collectively we can fight back and make our union even stronger.

In unity,

Jane A. Russell
Local 571 President

CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Cathay Williams enlisted in the Army using the name William Cathay on November 15, 1866. She informed her recruiting officer that she was a 22-year old cook. An Army surgeon examined Cathay and determined the recruit was fit for duty, thus sealing her fate in history as the first documented black woman to enlist in the Army even though U.S. Army regulations forbade the enlistment of women. She was assigned to the 38th U.S. Infantry and traveled throughout the West with her unit.

Selma Hortense Burke (1900-1995) was born in Mooresville, North Carolina. She received her formal educational training from Winston Salem University and later graduated in 1924 as a registered nurse from St. Agnes Training School for Nurses in Raleigh, North Carolina. After graduating she moved to New York City, where she worked as a private nurse. While in New York, Burke began to focus on her artistic creations. Burke began teaching art appreciation and education to New York youth. In 1942 she joined the Navy making her one of the first African American women to enroll. While in the Navy, Burke was commissioned to do a bronze relief portrait of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The portrait she created was adapted by the mint and is currently on United States dimes.



What's Missing from the Messenger?

Is there something innovative or exciting happening at your school? If so, we want to hear from you!

Email your news to Robin Hancock at: 571editor@gmail.com



We're on the Web!!!
www.wstu571.org

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